

Paris Street Retreat

September 9-13, 2020

With Roshi Michel Genko Dubois

Retreat Coordinator: Emmanuel Ollivier

"When we go... to bear witness to life on the streets, we're offering ourselves. Not blankets, not food, not clothes, just ourselves." - Bernie Glassman, Bearing Witness

To Sign up: Please contact Emmanuel Ollivier :
zenvoieducoeur@gmail.com



WHAT IS A STREET RETREAT?

A street retreat is a plunge into the unknown. It is an opportunity to go beyond our imagined limits. It's the barest poke at renunciation. We will live on the streets of Paris with no resources other than our true nature, experiencing homelessness first-hand, having to beg for money, find places to get food, shelter, to use the bathroom, etc. By bearing witness to homelessness, we begin to see our prejudices and boundaries directly and to recognize our common humanness. It is a way to experience our interconnection and realize our responsibilities.

Paris Streets Preparation

Meeting Point: To be announced to participants one week before the retreat starts.

Duration: The retreat starts on Wednesday September 9 at 10am and will end on Sunday September 13 at 2pm.

Street Retreat Logistics: Our group will be together almost all of the time, breaking into packs for short times during the day and always secured by buddies. We will meet twice a day for meditation, liturgy, and council.

Partial time participation is not an option. You can only join for the entire retreat.

At the beginning of the retreat, we will conduct an orientation. You will meet your street facilitator. We will discuss what to expect, but the unexpected will be our root teacher on the street.

Retreat Guidelines:

1. Do not shave, nor wash your hair for three days prior to the retreat. This will also start your street experience prior to leaving home.
2. Wear old clothes, as many layers as you feel appropriate for the time of year, and do not bring any change of clothes for the retreat duration, except, possibly, for an extra pair of socks. Be prepared for weather extremes.
3. Wear good, but not new, walking shoes. We walk a great deal.
4. Bring one piece of Photo ID only - your Driver's License or a government issued I.D. with your picture on it.
5. Bring a Poncho for rain. Mandatory.
6. Do not bring any money, illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, books or cell phones. Do not wear any jewelry including earrings, bracelets and watches.
7. Besides the clothes you are wearing bring only an empty bag (shopping, plastic) or small (not new) day pack for collecting food from shelters, etc. Women may bring one change of underwear.
8. Necessary prescription medication of course is permitted.

9. Be sure to practice rooting through garbage cans and picking up pennies on the street. It keeps us humble, and, truly, the treasures are unbeatable.^[L]_[SEP]
10. Bring a water bottle if you like. They are available in trash bins.^[L]_[SEP]
11. Bring a blanket that will roll up or a sleeping bag.

Raising Donations - a 'Mala'

On this street retreat we will be supported by non-profit organizations. Since we are not truly homeless, we need to make donations to those who will be supporting our lives. For all of the street retreats that organized by Zen Peacemakers, a donation has been requested of the participants in order to be able to offer donations to the nonprofit organizations that support us. Prior to this retreat we ask that you each beg of your family, friends, associates or just on the street for €200.

It is not acceptable for you to use your own funds for this purpose. To sincerely engage in this experience we need to humble ourselves at the outset, attempt to explain to others our reasons for participating and beg for their support. This is a hugely challenging and ultimately hugely rewarding experience. You need to ask at least five people – more would be great.

If you are not a member of Zen-Voie du Cœur, you need to pay an extra €20 registration fee. You may use your own funds for this purpose.

Once you have raised these funds, please contact Emmanuel Ollivier to receive details on transferring these funds into the safe holding account. Towards the end of the retreat we will, as a group, decide to which organization(s) those funds will be donated.

In Zen Buddhist practice raising donations in this way is known as 'assembling a Mala' – prayer beads. If you assemble a Mala of 18 or 108 beads, for example, you could beg proportionate donations for each bead. Your mala could also be, say, five or ten beads. Sincerely promise your donors that they will be traveling with you on the retreat and you will personally tell them about your experience when you return home. It is a lovely gesture to label the beads with your donors' names and wear them during your time on the streets.

To give others the opportunity to give is a true gift. Don't doubt it. When we are truly and selflessly motivated, people will support us. Trust in this all your life

Thank you for considering joining us on this retreat. There will be a maximum of 14 in our group including Michel & Emmanuel so please let us know if you intend to start raising the Donations necessary to register.